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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

TO ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

Ye twain who long forgot your brotherhood
 And those far fountains whence, through ages hoary,
 Your fathers drew whate'er ye have for glory,
 Your English speech, your dower of English blood—
 Ye ask to-day, in sorrow's holiest mood,
 When all save love seems film most transitory,
 "How shall we honor him whose noble story
 Hallows the footprints where our Lowell stood?"

Your hands he joined—those fratricidal hands,
 Once trembling each to seize a brother's throat:
 How shall ye honor him whose spirit stands
 Between you still? Keep love's bright sails afloat,
 For Lowell's sake, where once ye strove and smote
 On those wide waters that divide your strands.

—Theodore Watts.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

The death of Mr. Lowell is a grievous loss alike to his country and his friends. Poet, scholar, critic and statesman, he leaves behind him no more admirable master in each department nor any more truly representative American citizen. His career was one of constant and well-balanced progress, and his influence upon the literary taste and moral earnestness of the younger men of his time was most stimulating and beneficent. With Holmes and Whittier, he was the only survivor of the great morning of our literature. Irving was thirty-six years his senior; Bryant, twenty-five; Emerson, sixteen; Hawthorne, fifteen; and his friend and neighbor, Longfellow, twelve. Upon reaching his seventieth birthday, two years ago, Lowell was singularly vigorous, with the elasticity and spirit of fifty unabused years. But from the illness of a year later he never recovered. After a long absence in Europe as Minister in Spain and England and a subsequent residence in this country with his only child, a married daughter, he returned to his own house in Cambridge, only to die; and with him go a charming genius, a noble character, extraordinary literary acquirements, and a picturesque, brilliant and delightful personality.

Intellectually, Lowell was very remarkable. The quickness, grasp and originality of his mind, his keen wit, his exquisite humor, the fertility of his resource and the opulence and readiness of his memory were always surprising. Of Puritan descent, he was as characteristic a New-Englander as Emerson, and his moral nature was as positive as his mental quality. In his youth his verse inspired by antislavery agitation was so Tyrtæan that to the end of the orator's life it tipped, as with white flame, the fiery dart of Wendell Phillips' eloquence. But the poetic imagination chastened Lowell's ardor, and mellowed the radical into the wise interpreter of the national conscience. Of the crucial American controversy of the century, Lowell's *Biglow Papers* and Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are the enduring literary monuments, and American patriotism has no nobler expression and English poetry no loftier strain than the "Commemoration Ode."

Lowell's temperament was that of the poet, and his life that of the scholar. He was class poet at Harvard when

he was nineteen; he published his first volume of poems when he was twenty-two. At twenty-four he was editor, with Robert Carter, of a literary magazine. At twenty-five he published another volume of poems; and at twenty-six a volume of criticism upon some of the old poets. Before he was thirty he had published "The Vision of St. Launfal, A Fable for Critics," and the first series of the *Biglow Papers*. At thirty-six he succeeded Longfellow at Harvard as Professor of Modern Languages and Literature. He was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* for five years and of the *North American Review* for nine years. He published, between 1864 and 1870, a series of new *Biglow Papers*, two volumes of poems, the *Fireside Travels*, and two volumes of critical essays, *Among my Books* and *My Study Windows*. His last work was *Heartsease and Rue*, a volume of poems issued in 1888. In England, before he was Minister, he received in person the degree of D. C. L. from Oxford, and from Cambridge that of LL. D., and, while still Minister in England, he was elected Lord Rector of St. Andrews University, but resigned the office as incompatible with his diplomatic position.

Mr. Lowell's interest in public affairs was that of a clear-sighted man who knew history and other nations, and had the strongest faith in a government based upon popular intelligence. The country never sent abroad in the person of its Minister a better American. Spain and England saw in him not only a man who by his literary genius had conferred honor upon his country, but who showed that the finest quality of manhood, a wholesome common-sense thoroughly trained and amply equipped, was distinctively American. His patriotism was not the brag of conceit nor the blindness of ignorance, and the America of the hope and faith of its noblest children was never depicted with more searching insight than in his plea for democracy spoken at a mechanics' institute while he was Minister in England; nor were the manly independence and courtesy of the American character ever more finely illustrated than in his essay upon "a certain condescension in foreigners." It was a patriotism which did not admit that arrogance and conceit and blatant self-assertion are peculiarly American, nor insist that everything American was for that reason better than everything which was not American. It was never unmindful that the root of our political system and of our national character was not aboriginally American, nor did it deny to the traditions of an older civilization and to the life of older nations a charm distinctively their own. Our literature has no work more essentially American than the *Biglow Papers*, not only in the dialect form, but in its dramatic portraiture of the popular conscience of New England, of Lincoln's "plain people" who have given the distinctive impulse to American civilization, and from whose virtues has largely sprung the American character.

It is worth while to lay stress upon this quality of Mr. Lowell because it is the one to which much of his peculiar influence is due, yet which is often overlooked or denied. That influence sprang from the humanity of his genius, his generous sympathy with noble aspiration and endeavor, his political independence, and his steadfast fidelity to the high ideals of his youth. Something of his personal fascination is felt both in his poetry and his prose, and he has so cheered and inspired much of the best American life of his time that his death will fall as a bereavement upon multitudes who never saw his face.—*Harper's Weekly*.